

The Faculty of Music University of Toronto
and
CBC Stereo's Arts National
present

The St. Lawrence String Quartet

Geoff Nuttall & Barry Shiffman, violins
Lesley Robertson, viola
Marina Hoover, cello
with

Guest

Terence Helmer, viola



Sunday, February 21, 1993
at 2:30 pm
Walter Hall-Edward Johnson Building

Yiddishbbuk

Golijov

Oswaldo Golijov was born in La Plata, Argentina in 1960. After his initial studies with Gerardo Gandini, he received scholarships from the American-Israel Cultural Foundation and the Italian Government to study with Mark Kopytman at the Rubin Academy of Jerusalem and Franco Donatoni at the Academia Musicale Chigiana in Siena. His studies continued with George Crumb at the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D. in Music), Lukas Foss and Oliver Knussen at the Tanglewood Music Centre and Pierre Boulez at Carnegie Hall. He teaches now at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts.

Golijov's compositions have won him many awards. His recent compositional explorations, "roots and emanations of different musics", draw together gestures and sound imagery from his wideranging background including Jewish folk traditions, Tango and other South American genres. **Yiddishbbuk** (1992), subtitled "Inscriptions for String Quartet" was commissioned jointly by the Fromm Foundation and the Tanglewood Music Centre. Its premier, by the St. Lawrence String Quartet in July '92 at the Tanglewood Festival, received critical acclaim. The work takes its main title from a collection of apocryphal psalms. The imaginary "lamentations of Babylon" are set in three powerful, emotional movements inspired first by a photograph of three children who died at the Terezin concentration camp and remembering Isaac Bashevis Singer and Leonard Bernstein respectively. Golijov's music is of savagery and despair. In his own notes on **Yiddishbbuk** he quotes Kafka: "No one sings as purely as those who are in the deepest hell. Theirs is the song which we confused with that of the angels."

String Quintet in G minor, K. 516

Mozart

Mozart wrote very few string quintets, and all, with one exception, date from the last years of his life. It has been suggested that he took up the form seriously in order to flatter a patron who played the cello: Boccherini had written music for two violins, one viola and two cellos, and it is possible that Mozart adapted this form in order to give the cello more control over the bass line.

The quintet in G minor is among Mozart's most heartfelt and impassioned works. The opening movement is characterised by intensity and yearning, while the second is at first harsh and syncopated, and then melts into the calm lyrical theme also used in Mozart's Trio in G major. The third movement, a rich and profound adagio, is played entirely with mutes. A sombre adagio acts as an introduction to the finale, which makes use of an ironically care-free refrain.

TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

Terence Helmer, viola, was born in Northern Ontario. He studied with Geza DeKresz, Kathleen Parlow, Joseph Gingold and Arthur Grumiaux. A graduate of the University of Indiana, he also has a Diploma Superior from the Brussels Royal Conservatory. He made his debut with the Toronto Symphony at the age of 15. As a founding member of the Orford Quartet, he toured and recorded extensively with that group for a period of 21 years. Since leaving the Quartet in 1986, he has been freelancing as a musician and is also involved in the restoration and decorative painting of buildings in the Toronto area.

PROGRAMME

String Quartet in C major, Op. 76, No. 3

Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Allegro
Poco adagio cantabile
Menuetto: Allegro
Finale: Presto

Yiddishbbuk (1992)

Oswaldo Golijov
(b. 1960)

INTERMISSION

String Quintet in G minor, K. 516

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro
Minuetto: Allegretto
Adagio ma non troppo
Adagio

Programme Notes

String Quartet in C major, Op. 76, No. 3

Haydn

The string quartet form is said to have been invented by Josef Haydn: he had been writing for string trio for some time when his patron Karl Joseph Edler von Fürnberg suggested adding a viola part. Earlier music for four strings exists, but the type of musical language associated with the string quartet only emerges in the works of Haydn. Perhaps the most famous of his quartets is the so-called "Emperor Quartet" on this afternoon's programme. The well-known hymn tune composed by Haydn is the theme of the second movement.

The first movement begins as a broad allegro, but the main theme is transformed into a wild country dance. In the theme and variations movement, the familiar hymn melody can be heard shifting from instrument to instrument. The third movement, a minuet, forms a buffer between the high emotions of the second movement and the intensity of the fourth. The finale is defiant and challenging, so that the work as a whole can be seen to have two summits in the second and fourth movements, which are prepared by the first and third movements.

By unanimous decision, the **St. Lawrence String Quartet** was awarded first prize at the 1992 Banff International String Quartet Competition. In January of the same year, the quartet won the Young Concert Artists Competition and as a result made their debut to great critical acclaim this fall at New York's 92nd St. Y, and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. In just three seasons, the quartet has earned itself a reputation as an important new ensemble. Among the quartet's other awards are second prizes at the 1991 Glory of Mozart competition in Canada and the 1991 Melbourne International Chamber Competition in Australia.

Performing close to 70 concerts this season, the quartet's engagements include Paris, San Francisco, Boston, Toronto, Montreal, and Montevideo Uruguay. This February, the quartet recorded their first Compact Disc for CBC Records at the new Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto, scheduled for release this summer.

The St. Lawrence String Quartet is currently "Graduate String Quartet-in-Residence" at The Juilliard School, an honour that includes duties as teaching assistants to the members of the Juilliard String Quartet. Last spring they completed a unique two year residency with the Emerson String Quartet sponsored by the University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music.

The quartet was formed in the fall of 1989 where they studied in a program jointly sponsored by the University of Toronto and The Royal Conservatory of Music. The St. Lawrence String Quartet is generously supported by The Canada Council, the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Arts Council and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. The Quartet is represented by Andrews and Kwan Artists Management, Inc.

This afternoon's concert will be broadcast on the
CBC STEREO programme ARTS NATIONAL (94.1 FM)
on April 23, 1993 at 8 pm



Neil Crory: producer
David Burnham: recording engineer